

David's Successor

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, so we're coming towards, just as we were, we're coming towards the end of our study in 1 Timothy in the morning worship, we're coming to the end of our study in the life of David in our evening worship together.

And that's mainly been from 2 Samuel, but we're branching into the next book, which brings us towards the end of the story of King David.

So it's First Kings, there's Bibles at the side if you want to help yourselves to Bibles to read or you can follow on the screen or just listen. It's on page 278, and I'm going to read from verse 28 of the first chapter on page 279.

But I'm just going to, I'm going to set the scene for you before we do so, because we've got to the stage where David is really old, okay, and he's almost confined to his bedroom.

He's weak and he's quite cold physically, and he's out of touch. Even a beautiful young woman can't rouse him, although he's given a beautiful young woman to keep him warm.

[1 : 1 1] He seems to be uninformed about what's happening in his country. There's an impotency about him, and his son Adonijah during this period of David's weakness, who is now the next in line with four of David's sons already being killed, makes a move for the kingdom, makes a move for the throne.

And he's very similar to Absalom, he's handsome, he's wild, he's a bit of a playboy character really, in one of the commentaries that I was reading, Dale Ralph Davis is a great commentator, says that Absalom was high on glands, but low on brains and restraint.

And that's the kind of guy he was. And he invites all the power brokers of his day to come to a feast, to kind of prepare him to anoint him to be the next king.

It deliberately leaves out some of David's most loyal supporters, and Solomon, who is David's son and who indeed is the one who is God and David's heir to the throne.

And when Solomon's mother hears about that Bathsheba, she and Nathan, if you remember Nathan from the past, the prophet who exposed David's sin in the first place with Bathsheba, they come together and say, we'll need to stop this because it's Solomon who's to be king.

[2 : 3 6] And they involve themselves in a pincer movement as they come and speak to David. And Nathan says, look, why wasn't I informed? You know, I've been with you all these years. Why wasn't I informed?

And of course, David didn't know about it. And Bathsheba comes to him after that and says, look, what about your promise? Your promise to make my son Solomon king? If he's not made king, then our lives are in danger.

So that takes us kind of to where we're going to pick up the reading, okay? So David now knows that his son, Adonijah, has tried to usurp him and involve himself in a coup to take over the kingdom.

Remember, this is God's people. So verse 28, then King David answered, call Bathsheba to me. So she came into the king's presence and said and stood before the king.

And the king swore, saying, as the Lord lives, who has redeemed my soul out of every adversity, as I swore to you by the Lord, the God of Israel, saying, Solomon, your son shall reign after me and he shall sit in my throne in my place.

[3 : 43] Even so will I do this day. Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the ground and paid homage to the king and said, may my Lord King David live forever.

King David said, call me Zadok, the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah, the son of Jehoida. So they came before the king and the king said to them, take with you the servants of your Lord and have Solomon my son ride on my own mule and bring him down to Gihan and let Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet there anoint him king over Israel.

Then blow the trumpet and say, long live King Solomon. You shall then come up before him and he shall come up and sit on my throne for he shall be king in my place.

And I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel and over Judah. And Benaiah, the son of Jehoida, answered the king, amen. May the Lord, the God of my Lord, the king say so.

As the Lord has been with my Lord the king, even so may he be with Solomon and make his throne greater than the throne of my Lord King David. So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah, the son of Jehoida and the Cherethites and the Pelithites went down and made Solomon ride on King David's mule and brought him to Gihan.

[4 : 56] Then Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. Then they blew the trumpet and all the people said, long live King Solomon. And all the people went up after him playing on pipes and rejoicing with great joy so that the earth was split by their noise.

Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they finished feasting. And when Jehoab heard the sound of the trumpet he said, what does this uproar in the city mean?

While he was still speaking, we hold Jonathan, the son of Abbaith or the priest came. And Adonijah said, come in for you are a worthy man and bring good news.

Jonathan answered Adonijah, no. For our Lord King David has made Solomon king and the king has sent with him Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet and Benaiah the son of Jehoida and the Cherethites, the Pelithites and they made him ride on the king's mule and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Ghehon and they've gone up from there rejoicing so that the city is in an uproar.

This is the noise that you've heard. Solomon sits on the royal throne. Moreover, the king's servants came to congratulate our Lord King David saying, may your God make the name of Solomon more famous than yours and make his throne greater than your throne.

[6 : 19] And the king bowed himself on the bed and the king also said, blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel who has granted someone to sit on my throne. This day my own eyes seeing it.

Then all the guests of Adonijah trembled and rose and each went his own way. And Adonijah feared Solomon so he arose and went and took hold of the horns of the altar.

And it was told Solomon, behold Adonijah fears King Solomon. For behold, he has laid hold of the horns of the altar saying, let King Solomon swear to me first that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.

And Solomon said, if he will show himself a worthy man, not one of his hairs shall fall to the earth. But if wickedness is found in him, he shall die.

So King Solomon sent and they brought him down from the altar and he came and paid homage to King Solomon and Solomon said to him, go to your house.

[7 : 18] Okay, so that's the story that we have so far. And just to remind us that this book of Kings and the Samuel and Kings, Kings particularly was written very probably by Jeremiah, but it was written to God's people who by the time it was written were in exile in Babylon, they were enslaved, they were under oppression because of their own sin and idolatry.

And this story is sent to remind them of why it happened and also that God still had many promises and we've still redeemed them and bring them back if they turn back to him.

So it's really a reminder to them and also to us, it's a great reminder to us that God is working out his purposes. And you may read this and think that's way out of my understanding and it's way out of my comfort zone.

I'm not sure what's going on and how relevant is it to me, but I hope that as we go through it, you'll find that there are principles and truth here that are a great encouragement and a challenge to us because we're seeing right through the Old Testament, aren't we, that God is working out his promises.

God is working out what he intends to do for his people to redeem them and also through them to send a Messiah who will be the Messiah for the whole world, our Savior, our Lord.

[8 : 48] And we see in this story, despite Adonijah's best attempts to become the King of Israel, God's choice is Solomon, David's other son, Debasheba.

And Solomon is who God wants in the throne. It's Solomon who is to be the covenant King, not Adonijah. It's Solomon who is to be God's choice because he is God's spirit in him, and he is, at least he starts tremendously wise and he starts as a great blessing.

And the kingdom is greatly blessed as he follows God and serves God, the wisest man who ever lived in books of the Bible are penned by him, inspired by the living God.

Yet, of course, we see he is greatly flawed and he sins deeply. Where is his heart? Well, believe his heart is the Lord's.

But nonetheless, he is God's choice. And we see what God is doing here is still working out his purposes for the coming of a greater King, isn't he? Who said that all along that King David, there's a greater son than Solomon to come, Jesus Christ himself, and one who is himself without flaws, who is the King of kings, who is true truth and true wisdom, and the only genuine redeemer.

[10 : 17] And so we find that the Old Testament constantly brings up, as it were, kings and leaders who relentlessly fail and who relentlessly let the people down and let God down.

There's great disobedience and great idolatry and great sadness. And it's all pointing forward to the need for someone who is not like that to be the redeemer.

And the context of the Old Testament is always one of mystery and also opposition. So there's a lot of things that we don't know.

There's a lot of things that are not revealed. And in every Old Testament story that we're given, there is a malevolent evil undertone.

There's something, there's someone who is desperate to subvert God's purposes. So here, Solomon is God's choice. Adam and Ija is the one who seeks to rebel against God and reject God's plans.

[11 : 25] And it often seems to be that that works. But what we're reminded of is that God's purposes will not fail. And God will even take the dark things and the black things and the difficult things and He will work them out still for His good and for His glory and for our benefit.

And that takes me to the progressive revelation that we find in God's Word about God Himself. There's two verses that I think help us to understand the Seah passage like this, or indeed any of the passages in the Old Testament.

One is from Isaiah 55 verses 8 and 9, where God says to the people, look, my thoughts are not your thoughts. Neither are your ways, my ways, declares the Lord.

He says, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. That's a really important principal verse, not just for the Israelites, but for us.

When we're struggling and battling and we don't know what God is doing and we don't know what God is saying to us and where He's leading us. He said, look, I'm different from you and I will lead you, but it might not be the way that you want to go naturally.

[12 : 44] And then the second verse is also an Old Testament verse as He reveals more about Himself in Zechariah 4-6 where He says, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord Almighty.

So there's always kind of two competing realities. There's human might and power and individuality and living without God at the center of our lives or there's recognizing that it's not by human might and power, not by our own decision-making, but as we rely on God in His Spirit, we see His purposes being outworked.

And I think both these verses are really relevant here and will, I hope, help us in our understanding. So we've got this historical account at the beginning of Kings which is beginning to unfold the way God deals with His people and with humanity.

And you've got two main characters really in the story. You've got Adonijah and you've got David, your father and son in the story. Now Adonijah was young and bold, okay?

We see that, but he had no need for God. There's no reference to God in his life. There's no indication that he was following God or he'd prayed to God or he'd asked God's help for what he was planning to do to usurp the kingdom and become the king.

[14 : 05] There was an entitlement about him. He was the would-be king in verse 5 of chapter 1. We didn't read it, but he said, Adonijah, the son of Haggath, exalted himself saying, I will be king.

So you know, you can see that he had this sense of entitlement. He's the young pretender. It was his birthright to be king. The other sons were dead. He was the next in line and he had all the attributes.

He was handsome. He was fit. He was young. And so he starts scheming and planning and maneuvering to become the king.

And in so doing, he revealed his own self-reliance and his own planning, but his planning was flawed. He had this great feast for all these people.

Verse 41, Adonijah and all the guests were with him, heard it as they finished feasting. They heard this great sound of celebration.

[15 : 04] So with his self-reliance, as he was whining and dining his suitors, he didn't realize God was at work and God was doing something with Solomon.

He still had no need for God. He still thought he would work it out. So he thought if he was really sorrowful for what he was doing and he kind of held on to the horns of the altar as if this would be something he might have heard of that happening in the past when people were given mercy because they held on to the horns of the altar, he'd be shown mercy.

And he pleads to Solomon, I'm sorry for what I've done. And Solomon does show him mercy. There's an opportunity for him there to recognize God's way and to recognize that God would forgive him and that he could have a future.

But really we find what he did was he took that opportunity of life and continued to conspire to become king. And what happens is he remains resentful and unrepentant.

And you've got this amazing verse in chapter 2 and in verse 15 where he goes to Bathsheba and basically what he wants is he wants Abishag.

[16 : 19] He wants David's concubine to become his wife. Now that might seem a fairly innocent thing, but most commentators believe it was another attempt to, if he could take the old king's concubine or wife, it was a sign that he wanted to take the kingdom.

And in verse 15 we're told, he speaks to Bathsheba and he says, you know that the king, listen to this, you know that the kingdom was mine and that all Israel fully expected me to reign.

However, the kingdom has turned about and become my brothers for it was his from the Lord. And now I have one request to make, do not refuse me.

And so he asks for this wife. And there's this sense in which he's still kind of seething that the kingdom has been taken from him.

And everyone knew it was his and he says, oh yeah, and Solomon, it was the Lord's will. But it's as if he is really unhappy and unrepentant. And he still wants to destabilize God's purposes and plans.

[17 : 26] Adonijah, young and bold, no need for God. David was old and cold.

If Adonijah was young and bold, David was quite the opposite. He was old and cold. And it's kind of an end of life story about David's life. It does seem, if you read this whole section and look at it, it seems that poor David has lost his module.

He's stuck in his upper room. He's stuck in his bedroom. He's washed up. He's a washed up king. He's confined to his bed. He's impotent. It's highly ironic scripture that David, who went out of his way to see a naked woman bathing and take her for himself and in so doing murder her husband in and lie and cheat against God.

When he saw that woman, Bathsheba, and took her, he is now in his old age, he's been given a woman, Abishag, to lie with him, to keep him warm.

And we're told that he has no intimate relations with her. It's highly ironic, isn't it? At that stage, he is completely washed up, even though his friends try and support him in this way.

[18 : 49] He's uninformed. Verse 15 tells us that he doesn't know what's going on in his kingdom. He's being sidelined as the king. David, and I've said this before, and maybe I hope you don't think I'm too hard on a poor old David, will come round to see that that's not the case.

But he is suffering from bad choices, isn't he? Bad choices. He's lost three of his sons due to his bad choices. And now Adonijah is wild.

It's interesting, in verse 6 we didn't read it, but we're told that, no, we're not told in verse 6.

We're told somewhere, but it's not in verse 6, that David did not intervene in Adonijah's wild behavior.

He didn't correct him when he was wrong. And that is tremendously sad on David's part.

[19 : 51] Adonijah was wild, and he had had no fatherly intervention from David. He had... David had no moral authority with Adonijah.

He abdicated his responsibility, a responsibility even greater than the throne of Israel, to be an example, to love, to serve, to be an authority, to be a moral guide to his children.

And it feels by this stage he's lost all interest in them. He just let Adonijah live any way he wanted to. And there's the first section, just see, David seems just flat, and he's in his room, and he can't really be bothered with what's going on.

But he's stirred as he remembers God's promises to him. And he's stirred by the remembrance of God's purposes in bringing Solomon, or promising Solomon would be in the throne.

You see that change in verses 28 and 29, that she came to the king and stood before the king and the king swore. She said, as long as the Lord lives, who has redeemed me, my soul out of every adversity, as I swore to you by the Lord, the king, Solomon, your son shall reign before me.

- [21 : 04] And he keeps... He's come alive as he remembers God's promises and is stirred by God's deliverances in the past. It brings him to life again. And what we have in these kind of this end of life story is David coming alive when he thinks about his relationship with God, and it reveals his heart.

It reveals David's heart, David's heart scarred by all he's gone through, and even by the bad choices he's made. But he is always one who trusts in God's mercy and who believes that God knows what he's doing, and God is gentle and kind and forgiving and good with him.

You know, as the Lord has delivered, redeemed my soul out of every adversity. And it's unreal, isn't it, that God's choice for the king is Solomon, Bathsheba's son, second son.

The other one dying as an infant. God's promises using Solomon to outwork his purposes. He was God's man, God's choice, a remembrance of his relentless mercy and of his work of deliverance and of rescue.

And Solomon has made king. Adonis just thwarted. And verse 48 tells us that David just rejoices because of what God has done.

- [22 : 27] Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel has granted someone to sit on my throne this day. So there's this tremendous paradox between the young and the bold who had no time for God and the old and the cold who despite a life of mistakes is reliant on God and has a heart for God.

And that whole Old Testament history, but also the world's history is unfolding God's story, isn't it, in the same way?

So we have the world in which we live in God's eyes revolving around David's greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the promise of Him coming, being significant to the exiles who'd be reading this and who were still looking for the great king of kings to come.

Jesus is the one who came to do everything the good and the bad kings couldn't do. He came to obey God's law perfectly, dying in innocence in the place of the guilty, rising again to sit on heaven's throne.

- [23 : 43] The anti-hero Jesus is, isn't he? He's the unexpected hero born in poverty and never had a home as he traveled around the world around the ancient Near East at that point.

He came into Israel similarly to Solomon and a mule and a donkey, a ragtag of followers, anonymous for most of his life, a crown only of thorns, dyed in darkness, rose to the Lord of glory.

You see the parallels between God's purposes and God's ways and the person of Jesus Christ.

Everything points to Jesus Christ from the Old Testament forward and from the New Testament back. And that is because we need mercy and hope.

Just like the exiles in Babylon as they read this needed to have hope and needed to know of God's mercy because of their own idolatry and division.

- [24 : 49] And actually interestingly, the seeds of mistrust between Judah and Israel, between the two tribes of Judah and the ten tribes of Israel, happens around here, around this time, between God's people split because they didn't trust Him.

But that message of mercy and hope remains the message in all the turmoil of what we see around us is the message we need both globally but also personally.

We need that mercy and hope. And we're reminded in the story that God's sovereignty, even over the continued existence of evil.

There's a great deal of mystery in the way the world is outworking itself. There would have been great mystery for the exiles. Why are we here?

We thought we were God's people. When will He deliver us? What is happening? Where is the promised King on the throne? Much injustice, much slavery, much sadness they experienced because of their rebellion but also because of the evil in the world.

[26 : 06] And we are surrounded continually by the same injustice nationally and internationally and also personally. And we are reminded that through that and in that, God remains sovereign and God has His purposes and God has defeated evil and will destroy it when He returns and we're called to trust in Him.

And the last lesson we take from a passage like this, well, there are many but the last that I'm going to share with you is a good reminder that God chooses to redeem wrecks.

That's what He chooses. It's people who recognize that before God they are wrecked. That is a mark of understanding His sovereign choice.

So we are to be encouraged this evening. If you're an unbeliever this evening, if you're not a Christian and your life is a wreck and you think nobody will accept me, especially not God, take comfort from David's life and take comfort from the biblical description of every single person in life before God we have messed up, this is His way.

He redeems wrecks. It's just that some people won't admit that. We live deluded or self-righteous or comparative lives as we look around at other people and we miss out on His redemption and His forgiveness and His healing and His hope because we'll not admit that we're wrecks.

[27 : 53] So be encouraged if you're a Christian and you feel you've gone beyond the pale, then take encouragement from David and from the recognition of God's mercy and hope as we keep turning back to Him.

That is the great thing about David. He keeps turning back to God. He keeps recognizing His need for mercy.

He redeems wrecks and so the recognition for us is the peril of living without God. I mean, Adonijah is a great example of that. He thought he could live without God, young and bold.

And that's often what people think, isn't it? They think they're not a wreck. They think that they don't need God. And that remains for us, I think we were reminded of that this morning, a simple, an ongoing sinful temptation for us.

We don't really need God today. We'll take His gifts, we'll plan our lives, we'll ignore Him. We may even resent what He's doing in our lives or reject Him.

[29 : 05] And the reminder is for us to constantly be like David, constantly going back, constantly asking Him, having that prayer relationship being molded by His grace and by His favour.

Beware of the temptation as we think of a passage like this, of putting your hope in anything or anyone other than Jesus.

Again, we were reminded of that today and there's quite a dovetailing in many ways between the two messages. The reality that we simply can't lean on, ultimately other people.

We can't lean on other relationships. We can't lean on our parents. We can't lean on our husbands and wives, our friends. We can't lean on our ministers. We can't lean on anyone, ultimately, because the reality is every single person will let you down.

Everyone will let you down. And we will let other people down because we're wrecks. That's what we are. And we're called not to lean on and not to put our hope in and our expectation in our fellow human beings.

[30 : 14] And that means understanding that the best people in your lives will let you down, the closest people in your lives, the people you look up to, the people you admire, the people that you aspire to.

They will let you down. And it's a good thing to recognize that, an important thing, because we've let Jesus down a hundred to thousand times.

And as we recognize that, we will have a love that covers the multitude of sins with regard to other people. And we will not be ultimately disappointed when we're let down.

It doesn't excuse it. But the reality is that we're not to put our hope in other people or even in ourselves for that matter. And of course, the great danger, lastly, of abusing grace, when we look at a story like this, the true reality of being, as we were reminded this morning, legally forgiven is one great thing.

But we have a huge responsibility then to flee from sin and to fight against all that God hates.

[31 : 23] And as Christians, we can grieve and resist God's Spirit. We can live in pride and we can make very bad choices.

David made bad choices and he lived the rest of his life working out the consequences in this life of these bad choices. And it caused huge heartache and huge difficulty in his life.

Yet he was able to go back and know his redemption and know his hope in the living God. And so we have a responsibility not to run.

We've a duty not to run from our responsibilities, but to recognize and grasp that he is with us and he empowers us to live out our Christian lives in the power of the Holy Spirit.

I do think that the whole testimony of Adonijah living a wildlife because David never took the time to rebuke him or to discipline him or to love him and pull him from that is a huge challenge for us in our lives about our responsibilities and his parents as family together, a church family together, a responsibility to one another.

[32 : 44] And to live in such a way that our respect and our moral authority is not diluted by our lifestyle so that as parents or as workers or as colleagues or as brother and sisters, people don't look at us and say, well, why are you saying that?

You know, you're living a reprobate life. Is that you say you believe? And that clearly is what happened in David's life as his sons saw the reckless way he lived.

And yet he was a man after God's own heart because he kept coming back to the Lord. And that is a huge and significant reality for us.

Whatever we feel tonight as Christians, keep going back to the living God. Keep relationship with him. Keep speaking with him. Keep pleading for mercy, wisdom, grace, humility, understanding, acknowledge that we are Rex and yet acknowledge that we are being transformed to be like him and live in that way.

And I just finish again with these two verses which are hugely important for us in our understanding, not making an idol of Jesus after our own image, not making God the kind of God we want.

[34 : 02] Remember what he says that my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways, my ways as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than yours, my thoughts than your thoughts, not by might, adenijah, not by power, but by my spirit, David, says the Lord Almighty.

Amen. Let's pray together as we think about that. Father God, we pray that you would help us to understand that these Old Testament historical accounts in Scripture and about your people, your covenant people and the relationship you had with them still remain significant and important and has a powerful message for us in our own lives.

And may we bow before you in worship and not make an image of God that is made in our own image, a God that we can stick in our back pocket comfortably and ignore, but may we be those who worship what you have revealed about yourself in Jesus, the amazing truth of what is made known, but also confess that we appreciate there are many things you have just kept secret, many things we don't know, there's many things that we're glad we don't know, but there's also many things that we are just to trust you on when we would maybe, we think we would love to know.

Help us to remind ourselves that you're not like us, that you're infinite, you're pure, you're love, you're justice, a complete and absolute.

And may we bow before you. We seek repentance for living without you and trying to live in our own strength and help us just to be people after God's own heart that constantly come back in weakness and in need for renewal, for transformation, for being made holy and godly.

[36 : 12] And may we serve you in the light of that. We thank you for your forgiveness. We thank you for your care and protection and love.

And we pray that we would live in the light of your mercy all the time, your deliverance and your grace and the outworking of your promises in our lives. May we ask in Jesus' name, amen.